

The Leaping Bones of ENRICO DAVID

"It is more salutary for thinking to wander into the strange than to establish itself in the understandable."

Martin Heidegger, Attributed to Heraclitus, Fragment 50

"Have you have been hugged by Enrico? His chest feels huge so maybe you can imagine the size of his ribs. But if his ribs are big, his arms are even bigger in proportion. I have this image of his arms being able to wrap around someone twice, well at least my slender frame. That is how I think about him, wrapped around me twice."¹

Sculpture is just that capacity to imagine what that wrapped around twice might look like and then give it congruent physical form. If the mind plays funny tricks with appearance then its is the potentiality of the art of sculpture to give shape to this reality in order that mind and matter might manifest new visibilities. This in turn implies not only new process of considering form forming form but also the introduction of the grammar necessary to space it.

In the studio there are the scattered remains, like so many bones, that occasionally burst into life and become something else, shuffled again into a new state, whilst retaining that original patina of overlooked-ness. If they are like bones then they are bones that leap. Spirit requires materiality to exist and this is why Hegel claimed that "spirit is bone." Enrico extends this into; spirit is bone that leaps in order to add the dimension of surprise.² Sculpture is an extended material practice combined with either a flash or a leap. If there is no surprise in this event than there is no event of sculpture. Connected to the dimension of surprise is wandering "in the strange" or into the unmarked. Surprise is thus connected to being tested.

¹ "This image of arms stretched around twice makes me think of a chasm like the ones that due to bad engineering or poor planning that open up corrupted urban sites, swallowing up rail tracks, buildings and even people." Enrico David

² See Jean-Luc Nancy Being Singular Plural Stanford 2000 He states that: "The surprise is the leap into the space-time of nothing, which does not come "before" or from 'elsewhere'; as such, it is a leap into the space-time of space-time "itself." P173

There are these moments when he muses on the relationship to this bone and then to that bone but this is without the curiosity of anatomy as a form of knowledge.³ Instead there is a different route that is closer to knowing things in-properly. I have this unformulated question; what is this knowing things in-properly? I have this feeling that his sculptural process is born out of this contradictory notion of knowing things in-properly. This is not an outcome of a fatigue of theory but rather as a condition of opening the figure beyond the confines of immobility or constancy of presence. Vision remains with its object, confirming the presence of what it sees and within this constancy can affirm a process of knowing. The root of the concept of epistemology is to stand before or over something. Thus seeing and knowing are intimately linked together. But art is a special form of seeing outside of presence, a seeing in advance of sight and with this, the awakening of a desire for a future and with this a re-occasioning of space or production of spacing⁴. This corresponds to the awakening of the eye to see what formerly has or could not see and implicit within this is a form of violence or danger. A state of friction is the outcome of this motion of the 'what is' and the 'to-come' because the object in question is not secured by knowledge but rather by rhythm. Rhythm is related to a form of generation, a running through and over that mixes anticipation with the void of non-appearance. Being on an edge is this state of restless friction through which the artwork occasions itself when it striates times continuity⁵. This can be understood as a prolongation of the power of the imagination.⁶ To return to the work of Enrico David, the rhythmical intensification in and between works is a consistent feature of his whole enterprise. Much of the time the works in question do not have much by way of weight or stance because their labour is not related to the fields but from a process of tenderly grasping what lays outside their orbit of material contact.

Sometimes it is possible to play a game of recognising temporal references through locating stylistic or period features. As I start to look, a whirl of art historical references start to surface: Art Deco, archaic art, late modern and with half recognised traces related to other references that escape immediate processes of

³ "Forms of knowledge, insofar as they are forms and insofar as they are those of knowledge, can for their part be none other than those of commodity-language and thus must a priori be 'deranged', 'phantasmagoric', 'mystical' and 'fetishistic'." Werner Hamacher Essay 'Lingua Amissa' in *Ghostly Demarcations* Verso 2008 P176

⁴ Derrida describes spacing as "the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space."

Jacques Derrida *Margins of Philosophy* Harvester 1982 P13

⁵ In *Time for Revolution* Antonio Negri sees kairos: "as the passage from fullness to the void and as the production of being on the edge of time." (p149) Poiesis and kairos are thus intimately link action and time. "Kairos cannot contain within itself its own telos" (P148) so both kairos and poiesis determine their form in relationship to the rupture they constitute as a relationship to the to-come.

⁶ "The imagination is a linguistic gesture; the gesture which throws a web over the to-come so as to know it, construct it, organize it with power."

Antonio Negri *Time for Revolution* Continuum 2005 P147

naming. This is like the attempt to place a garland of flowers around a structure, as it appears to prepare the way for its final passage into the world or into historical category. Is this the act of simply confirming presentation as such but this implies that art lacks immediacy or that we are being drawn close to a thing that also wishes to impose distance? To chase after the conceptual armatures of art is to be drawn into the meeting point concept and deception. Then there is a more abstract game which relates to assembling phrases: a congregation of gestures, a field of forces, a tumult of reserve, gradations of slow release, disavowal of congested time, the transportation of thought. This is not to set up a contest between art history and philosophical poetics but it is obvious that both approaches might congeal or become stale thus becoming an obstacle for thought.

"I read in "Gesture and the Nature of Language" that the different categories of language are created by intentional acts performed by the hands: verbs derive from the movement of the hands, nouns "grab" things by their name and adverbs and adjectives modify movements and objects through the use of tools. Gestures allow for the transcription of oneself from one state to another. Somewhere on the wall of my studio I wrote the words: " In a panic-stricken application". I don't recall the occasion, maybe because of the pervasive nature of this feeling. I try to put it down to practical matters: perhaps it had to do with the way the armature of an object is assembled in order to provide a skeletal basis upon which the object itself can be formed, or how thick the layer of clay required can be supported by the wires underneath. In any case, accuracy and emergency are asked to stick together, and the marriage of application and panic seems to cause a tightening up of my groin muscles."⁷

This is an exhibition of mobility of all the different modes of registration. Thus material and temporality are yoked together in this circulation. Exposure is implied but a special type of exposure, an exposure to strangeness⁸. Something is in the air; likewise something is in the stuff and forms open in the in-between of action and withdrawal. The 'in the air' quality is the feeling of imminence. Can an object stage the before of time or the after of time? Is there the other of time⁹? What if the future

⁷ Enrico David Notebooks Reference: Armstrong, Stokoe, Wilcox Gesture and the Nature of Language Cambridge 1995

⁸ In her commentary on the work of Jean-Luc Nancy 'At the Limits of Presentation' Martta Heikkilä says: "What is crucial to Nancy's notion of art is a matter of strangeness. Art means access to what cannot be anticipated: art comes into presence on its own limit and as this limit, which borders on what is still strange, that is to say, unknown, impossible and negative to it, and even remains so." (P291)

⁹ For a notion of the other of time Maurice Blanchot thinks that time has begun to resemble the time outside time of the origin itself so the origin of art is in worldlessness, worklessness, and truthlessness. This implies that art is divorced from the truth of history.

has already been and the past is a continual state of yet to be? Questions weave in and out.

Theodor Adorno idea that modernist art contained a 'utopian blink' captured the sense of arts futural anticipation. The phrase (and what an enduring phrase) itself is in part based on ideas of temporality and art that originate in Jena Romanticism at the end of the eighteenth century. In part it is based upon the premise that are functions outside of the actuality of the present and thus contains the seed of difference to the principle of reality. The notion that art also functions by introducing a principle of rupture or shift is also in keeping with this notion of Adorno. What would happen, if instead of citing this phrase, we instead claimed the future yet to come merely opened out 'grim disintegration' contained within the present? In effect this would remove the figure of hope from arts schematic reserve. It appears that art requires exception and with it carries a disavowal for what is ordinary but in itself this cannot imply hope as an ethical consequence.

"The future 'is', if it is at all, that which shows itself insofar as it effaces the signs it permits. It presents itself only in the retraction of its signs."¹⁰ This idea of the future implies displacement as opposed to continuity; a sense of time marked by something touched by absence rather than the logic of presence.

The setting (of the exhibition) both has spaces and intervals but also tenses. On moment it might appear as a staging, the next a descent in a nether region of the mind but also the sense of the coming and goings of figures collecting and dispensing all their different parts and attributes. In all of this it is an exhibition of exhibiting, a coming into light and exploration of recess, a channelling of drives and a presentation of what in everyday life is merely vapour on the edge of disappearance. Should we wish for more? Of course disappointment is the uninvited guest.

To exhibit connects with a will to run ahead of oneself, appropriating what is past in order to seize the future. This is in accord to the sense that temporality should not be experienced simply as the registration of fate but an active shaping of drives becoming manifest as temporality. Thus to exhibit is not to show oneself or something as it really is in the sense of present tense, being present but rather a process of temporalizing. Thus for Heidegger: "Temporality is the primordial 'outside-of-itself' in and for itself."¹¹ To exhibit is both to throw and an exposure to being thrown. This is why artists so often evoke the idea of being on the edge or exhibiting being a boundary like experience. There is something at stake, a claim, an occupation of territory, a rolling of dice, a challenge or a setting free but whatever the nuance a necessary sense of risk in order to achieve the status of event.

¹⁰ Werner Hamacher in *Ghostly Demarcations* Verso 2008 P182

¹¹ Martin Heidegger *Being and Time* Blackwell 1990 P.377

Fiction: He was attempting to write a list of ten subjects for sculptural works. Magazines often ask artists to do such things. Perhaps it might constitute an investigation into the structure of the imagination or even that artists might know little of the difference of memory and imagination. What was clear was that the exercise should risk with a dimension of impossibility and as such should not stand too readily in the clear light of day. Anyway the first image was of a tongue with a flick knife inside of it, as if waiting to lacerate stale thoughts before they reached the world as utterance. The next was of a beautiful man who would only kiss his parrot because he feared infections from human mouths. Thirdly was naked buttocks pointed toward the full moon in the hope of expanding intuition. He then remembered a dream in which a man was looking down on his face in order to lick away all his tears both from the past and those to come, promising in turn sleep for a thousand years. The list continued like this and he realised that he was slowly working his way through the anatomy of the body, the splicing of body parts with instruments, all mixed with fragmentary narratives or broken images mutated or subjected in turn to imaginative re-codification. Anyway he never completed the list because even if such lists might resonate with reality of the working process, they are better kept hidden. Sculpture is what is delivered to the open whilst imaginative schemas remain locked away as if in the shadow realm. He wondered if he could sustain his practice with such an idea. He started to think of other times and periods which might open out the constellation of the organic and inorganic in curious ways. This drift of thought appeared to linger for many days in a process he might describe as figuring or the introduction of friction against the wall of completed formulation.

In his book 'Genet'¹² Edmund White discusses how Giacometti posed Genet to reflect a sitting scribe figure from the Egyptian Old Empire. This is not simply a relationship of a look or style but a relationship of temporalities and understanding of time through which visibility is issued. More than a relationship to appearance, Giacometti is seeking a relationship to rhythm, a complex, unnameable sense of repose held within the figure that reveals such a relationship. Drawing a line across time in such a way is obscure and leads to a thought of what lays buried in such a gesture. In a text on Giacometti, Genet in turn proposes that these sculptures are not meant for future generations but rather for the dead: "...the work is not intended for future generations. It is offered to the innumerable people of the dead."¹³ A question is in circulation here, what would it be like to live within a culture so explicitly fixated upon death? What Genet creates through a gestural link between Giacometti and an Egyptian culture is relationship between art and death. One of the most striking things would relate to the idea of this relationship is that death belongs to no one because it exists as a 'empty form of time', so a culture of death would follow the logic of this. This dissolution of identity and empty time (de)compose this logic. Following from this point the thought of the various gestural lines that are being drawn are of course being sought but they do not offer themselves on the level of

¹² Edmund White Genet Picador 1993

¹³ The Selected Writings of Jean Genet Ecco Press 1995 P311

style, as much as trace or scent of the in between of archaic lost sense of time and a time to come. It is not so much the other of modernist temporality but the realisation striation within the model of continuity.

One work might contain the experience of trauma, sensuous immediacy, and the anticipation of yet another trace of time that is difficult to name but is marked by intensification. In effect that is all three registers of time but without a definite incline towards one in particular, even though temporality is invisible, the experience of time remains active throughout. What is always a constant factor is the working tension between the formation of form and the counter rhythmical tendency towards dissolution. The struggle of discussing sculpture relates not only to the account of material-figure-form and space but the way mind-temporality-language- gesture inter-relate and mutate into the play of these indices. Following from the discussion of the temporality within Giacometti's art it is tempting to seize upon an idea of a regressive modernity stripped of impulse to the yet to come but the thesis that is developing in this seemingly regressive turn is the means of tightening a coiled spring capable of releasing the energetic discharge of a 'yet to come' outside of the predications of the present.

Fiction: "'Depression is deep in my bones.'" He would state this and in this stating, would confirm the idea that this condition emerged out of the lack of mutability. The linking of bones and depression had assumed a fact like status within his life. Following from this idea of depression being linked to a lack of mutability, he also had this perception that he had neither top nor bottom to his being because his kernel had already descended into the deep of the earth leaving a mere empty shell in the wake of this descent and thus, without proper substance, what remains is without dimension. He remembered that he had once attended a lecture about the idea of the one-dimensional man but he realised that this condition of total estrangement was not really his condition at all. Instead he conceived of himself as a kind of full stop. Part of the idea of being a full stop was the idea that sentences complete themselves or come to rest at such a point."

There is always something that arrives late. Is Giacometti the late supplement to the Egyptian scribe or is aesthetics the late supplement to art? Perhaps this is what is at stake: "Art enters into the aesthetic day it is declared, if not dead, then at least a thing of the past, surpassed as regards the Absolute (philosophy), as though this baptism were also a death certificate."¹⁴ If art had no future other than interminable death why not align with a true culture of death that knows itself as such. Did Giacometti plunge into the valley of death in the knowledge that modernity was consecrated on the miserable denial of such experience?

Dream (a late supplement): I was looking at a photograph of myself as a two-year-old boy and there I was sucking a brick that I was holding between both my hands. Perhaps I was traumatised by not being able to suck upon the breast anymore and

¹⁴ Marc Froment-Meurice That is to Say Stanford 1998 P185

the dream was staging or presenting this. Whatever the possible narratives it was nonetheless a compelling image and even when transposed into language, it remains vivid.

Fiction: I start to notice that I am not speaking very much. So I get on the phone to a friend and we start to discuss what is happening in Syria. For some strange reason I am looking at cloud formations and can recognise a face of what appears to be like a Greek god. I tell her about this and she laughs. I say to her that she shouldn't laugh because at a given moment in our life such a visage of a face manifests for a few moments and that several people on witnessing this have felt to be directly touched by either the gods or God. This is of course the unconscious basis of why humans have always looked upward to the skies to see if they might be witness to the gods or God's appearance. Anyway imagine seeing your face in the sky. Of course it would be almost an automatic reflex to believe that you might be in some sense a chosen being. I know she thinks that I am teasing her but really I am serious.

Jean-Francois Lyotard states that: "Thoughts are not the fruits of the earth. They are not registered by areas, except out of human commodity. Thoughts are clouds."¹⁵ If thoughts are like clouds, does that imply that they drift without a definite bounded condition. Following from this Deleuze claims that we rarely think and that thought has an affinity with the 'true' rather thought issues a process of problematisation. Before trying to work out the thought and un-thought of any work it is sometimes necessary to work out a relationship to both. When the soft flesh of a cock becomes hard like bone, then thought disappears. One thing transforms into something else and added to this process is a subtraction. Is this a secret formula for understanding sculptural processes? Formula on the one side, and metaphor on the other; what a miserable conflict of forces in attempting to account for the play of thought and making but then such conflicts create the possibility of a passage through.

"There's a small standing figure that I modelled. The lower body had the legs bent at the knee, knees touching. It stands on the tip of the toes. The upper body looks like a deformed mass, not dissimilar from what might happen if you try to wear a jumper and you stretch the arms missing the armpits. Eyes and mouth are placed in correspondence of where there might be a shoulder, looking like the caricature of "an expression" melting away from a face and sliding down the body. If the monument to a weakened bladder were ever commissioned, I would have to submit this as an entry. It is in describing such physiological fragments that the making of the works seem to find an alibi. It is as if for sculpture to exist sculpture, it has to look inwards."

Fiction: I had this image of her jumping from cloud to cloud. Usually this could only be a dream image but I swear that it was real. This is why I started to think of her as

¹⁵ Jean-Francois Lyotard Peregrinations: Law, Form, Event Columbia University 1988 P5

a sky dancer. If I painted this it would appear as perfectly feasible, but if I speak of such a thing, then I viewed as being touched by madness.

I am living in a really strange society. As you know I have lived for a very long time. At times I think that this is like a very special kind of suffering because it becomes hard to translate sense anymore. In these times I believe that people have lost all of their skills related to being on this earth. They are all told what they need to do, yet, they are not aware that this is the case. In a way they lack what I call the refinement to live properly. It is truly distressing to be a witness of this transformation. These people used to call themselves modern and then they revised this and called themselves post-modern but now they do not really know how to call themselves. For me they seem to be at some kind of end because they display so many signs of being lost. It is bizarre really because when I lived in the time when the earth was flat, or at least that was the belief, people had a greater sense of life. I know this is the case because they looked at the sky differently. Do not ask me to explain this; it is just the way it is.

The initial impulse of philosophy was in wonder, perhaps as a figure of this is in the looking at the starry abode with the realisation that there is a pulsation beyond immediate finite limits. To be able to point outside of one's finite boundary is the very gesture of thought itself. "In keeping with this demand is the strenuous, almost over-zealous and frenzied effort to tear men away from their preoccupation with the sensuous, from their ordinary, private (*einzelne*) affairs, and to direct their gaze at the stars; as if they had forgotten all about the divine, and were ready like worms to content themselves with dirt and water. Formerly they had a heaven adorned with a vast wealth of thoughts and imagery."¹⁶

Enrico once described the moment he witnessed his father die when he was seventeen years old. Thirty of his friends and family stretched around the table, his father was laughing aloud but this was replaced by a spluttering or coughing sound. Suddenly he was on the floor and the stillness of death had overtaken the excess of life. The narrative of this event has circulated again and again. Enrico likens it to an imaginary scene from a Pasolini film. A whole segment of his work involves poetic encounters with the spectres of history and almost all his films conclude with a death, suggesting a passage into either the meta-historical or mystical. It might be that this moment has not yet assumed a stable mode of characterisation yet so its circulation lacks stable identity. The visual moment of death thus becomes a blind spot.¹⁷

¹⁶ Hegel *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* Oxford 1977 P5

¹⁷In her book, 'The Shortest Shadow' Alenka Zupancic states: "As for the asymmetrical disjunction between life and death involved in the question of "true knowledge," one could encapsulate the point of the passage as follows: a fraction of life is caught up in death, and this is what blinds life as to its truth – but also what enables life to thrive. In other words, the fraction of life that is caught up in death is not simply situated on the other side (of life); it also constitutes the blind spot of life itself. This blind spot is thus nothing other than the way the fraction of life caught up

"Seeing bodies falling, as bodies do, at a relatively early age seems to have brought me into a place of trying to articulate a language that I would describe as failure. Firstly there is the fact of death, the physical sense of disappearance signifying an end to existence. I remember a phrase that went round my head: "Where on earth have you gone?" Then there is the image of single components of the falling body turned into verb and with this the way that meanings transcend final use or employment. This implies a reassignment. So there is a chain that stretches out the relationship between material facts, the function of the imaginary, reiterative operation of language, and the naming of things. I am left sculpting a head that has to make sense of this chain but ultimately as to open out the gesture of failure. Physiology in sculpture is paired with language in ways that can be overwhelming. Rib cages exist in a matrix that is always open to re-arrangement, their content being recited like haikus or even scribbles of miraculous signs that evade clear translation. Bone is sculpture and sculpture is the place for bones to gather. The expanse of white stone shaped into human form over the ages... big bone-like effigies at the mercy of large mouths to pick up and gnaw over, emitting sounds that could be mistaken for a language outside of the strict formalities of language proper. All of this is brought together with the fact of death. The problem with sculpture is to locate a site of where to place it and then how to imagine a way for sculpture to shallow up the space around it or even for it to provide time and space with a suitable site." ¹⁸

Death is the point at which spirit and bone are separated. A Picasso 'Self Portrait' 1972 depicts that moment of apprehension when the face transmutes into a skull. It is a face seized by the terror of death, so spirit and bone no longer cohere as face. The look of terror on a face is the consciousness of the potentiality of separation and is the anticipation of the discontinuity at the other side of separation. Sculpture deals intimately with this issue of separation between spirit and bone. We condemn sculpture if it appears dead, but if it shines, it moves us (this is just in the language of the common place).

"I made a line drawing of a figure in profile, the head arched backwards so much that it creates a swelling of the upper thorax. Placed between the back of the head and the shoulder blades I have placed a lump of wax that looks like a slug or a head cushion like the ones used for long flights. I am not certain if that lump is a support for the head or if it is the opposite as in something that would cause extreme arching. Then another switch occurs and I relate it to a kidney. In the making process I mix some plaster and pigments together and the streaks of colour make it look like fossilized hair trapped in matter. The hair has been removed from the head and entered into the kidney. Such is the abject feeling of this image and cannot find a

in death is inscribed – or projected back – into life itself. There are moments when we have the experience of seeing things from the point of view of this blind spot. "

¹⁸ Enrico David Letter

way of going forward. The palms of my hands become drenched in sweat just with the thought of such an image."¹⁹

We are talking about the way that philosophers write and the way artists write. Although he has little regard for his own writing I say that I like the way that Daido Moriyama writes. It might even be a product of his lack of regard that lends to the writing a special quality that I might perceive as a condition of purity that is a product of understanding, perception and feeling. The style might be even be impure and like his photographs, touched by a special kind of dirt which we might designate as being raw. "A human being is nothing more than a life spent attentively passing through an assemblage of countless scenes. You can say life is transitory and live it at that, but when I wonder where on earth a certain scene from a certain time and a certain period disappeared to, for me that is not sentimentality but rather a feeling closer to irritation. All people lose their scenes one after another. Another way of expressing this is to call it an exasperation with time. Time is not something that comes pressing down on each of us. Recalling scenes that are being lost is, simultaneously, presaging scenes of the death that is to come."²⁰ I especially like the phrase "exasperation with time" because it seems that we both continue to chew on it for some time before moving onto to other things.

Language that is stretched out between life and death either constitutes itself as literature or torment when it fails to reach the condition of form. One condition of form is of experience ascending, the other condition is counter to this in the form of descent but both imply falling, if only in different directions. Literature, for it to be literature properly defies the logic of gravity and with this the logic of certainty.

"We are the children who have swallowed up our parents too soon, who frighten ourselves on that account and, to save ourselves, reject and throw up everything that is given to us- all gifts, all objects. Even before things for us *are*, we drive them out, dominated by drive as we are, and constitute our own territory, edged by abjection, misjudged shapes, grotesque prints on nylon, cheap grins that look like keyboards. Fear cements our compound, conjoined to another world, thrown up, driven out, forfeited. What we have swallowed up instead of maternal love is emptiness, or rather a maternal hatred without a word for the words of an absent father, existing but unsettled, living yet unsteady, merely an apparition, but an apparition that remains. That is what we try to cleanse ourselves off, tirelessly."²¹

"Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of 'world history', but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had

¹⁹ Enrico David Letter

²⁰ Daido Moriyama *Memories of a Dog* Nazraeli Press 2004 P156

²¹ Enrico David *Throat Plugs*

drawn a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die. -One might invent such a fable, and yet he still would not have adequately illustrated how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature. There are eternities during which it did not exist. And when it is all over with the human intellect, nothing will have happened."²²

Fiction: Over the later years of my life I was inclined to believe that death was like the earth calling, as if it occasioned a return to place, but in my earlier years the contrary thought was persistent, that is, the sky would make its call. Perhaps earth or sky is not such a great difference but it does appear to impact upon the orientation of gestures. Both air and earth could be understood as abysses, one dense, and the other empty. Both in turn secure different relationships to language because concentrated within their respective fields are the imaginary gravity or ascent of death.

I am not certain of why my thoughts drift across to the figure of Oedipus but it might. Experience shifts between the intended object and the knowing subject. It can be informed by ideas but equally by affective intensity without belonging to either realm. It is related to the very presence of being whereas the work of art contests this by drawing upon the shapeless depth of non-being in order to present a mode of difference outside of representing the world. This is why art is related to interruption, caesura or aporia. The question is how to create a space that is not entirely subordinated to the reality principle. In discussing sublimation Alenka Zupancic claims: "The creative act of sublimation is not only a creation of some new good, but also (and principally) the creation and maintenance of a certain space for objects that have no place in the given, extent reality, objects that are considered "impossible." Sublimation gives value to what the reality principle does not value."²³ be because great works of art appear both to reveal secrets whilst concealing others. So indirectly it might be because of this relationship to secrecy and with this notion the idea of how humans are not their own self-illumination. It is also a drama about nothing being quite as it seems, so is presented as a riddle (and not only presents riddles but becomes a riddle or enigma), translatable on one level but resistant to translation on another. As a drama it appears to startle the very space in which it is presented within.

Oedipus was a stranger who became king only to become a stranger again, but in a way he was always a stranger in different guises and in different ways. The stranger always comes from elsewhere,²⁴ thus he was never properly speaking in place.

²² Nietzsche Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's Humanities Press 1979 P79

²³ Alenka Zupancic The Shortest Shadow MIT 2003 P77-78

²⁴"The Stranger comes from elsewhere and is always somewhere other than where we are, not belonging to our horizon and not inscribing himself upon any representable horizon whatsoever, so that his "place" would be invisible – on condition that we hear in this expression, following a terminology we have sometimes used: what turns away from everything visible and everything invisible."

The tragic drama of Oedipus relates to a cross roads in cultural history²⁵. Oedipus emblemizes the passage not only of myth to reason but the transition to a subject that is self-conscious, auto-reflective and autonomous. For Hegel this is a passage from unconscious symbolics of the Egyptians to a conscious symbolics of the Greeks. The stratification of the psyche reinstitutes the soul of the subject (as fissure) that implies that the discovery of the Oedipus complex and the unconscious was a simultaneous event. Thus the cultural inclination to fix and rationalise structures in coupled with wandering dispersals of unconscious flux. The question today is working out what question embedded in the drama haunts us today because that it haunts is not in question. The figure²⁶ never ceases to be re-figured even though this might be closer to a dis-figuration.

It is uncanny to think of Oedipus as a figure at the cross roads because the name Oedipus (or in Greek Oidipous) derives from the root oid, "know" and pou, "where" or "somewhere" or pou meaning "foot." In the play an unnamed Corinthian arrives and offers an etymology of his name as "swollen foot" which switches the oid, "know" with oide, "swell". This shift in etymology resonates through the core of the play for Oedipus is both defined and ruined by his feet because he answered the riddle of the Sphinx in regard to the question of which creature goes first of four feet, then two feet and finally three feet.

Maurice Blanchot The Infinite Conversation P52

²⁵ In 'A Thousand Plateaus' Deleuze and Guattari develop the idea that: "Oedipus is almost unique in the Greek world. The whole first part is imperial, despotic, paranoid, interpretive, divinatory. But the whole second part is Oedipus's wandering, his line of flight, the double turning away of his own face and that of God. Rather than interpretative signifying irradiation, there is a subjective linear proceeding permitting Oedipus to keep a secret, but only as a residue capable of starting a new linear proceeding. Oedipus, his name is atheos: he invents something far worse than death or exile, he wanders and survives on a strangely positive line of separation or deterritorialization... It was not by chance that Freud pounced upon Oedipus. Psychoanalysis is a definite case of a mixed semiotic: a despotic regime of significance and interpretation, with irradiation of the face, but also an authoritarian regime of subjectification and prophetism, with a turning away of the face (the positioning of the psychoanalyst behind the patient suddenly assumes its full significance)." (P138)

²⁶ Figure (figura) meant form or imprint but in a modern context has a close connection to desire. Lyotard identifies three types of figure: image-figure as in traces of images, form:figure as in underlying schema and matrix-figure as the violation of the discursive order. The "figural is a third space at work between signification... and designation or reference." Roy Sellars in Stuart Sim ed The Lyotard Dictionary Edinburgh 2011 P77

Greek sculpture was expressive of the nobility and beauty of the body and yet Sophocles presents images²⁷ of corpses and lacerations that disturb such harmony. He dared to think on the other side of the project of rationalisation, so developed a stream of poetical invested images to be carried over as a corrective to the futural optimism that was culturally becoming embedded. Rather than presenting schemas of reason, he presented the convulsive disordering born out of drives and the way these drives appear to cross over and fall into misrecognition. The cultural foundations of abjection are rooted in such confrontations of sense over two and a half thousand years ago. This in part also points to the persistence of commentaries upon Oedipus in recent theory because the aesthetic force it carries with it is still alive.

I remember listening to a presentation of a student whose work was predicated upon the idea of shame. She expressed the notion that shame was the foundational core of being a subject because we have the apprehension of becoming a corpse. This implies that we become a thing like substance or object. Yet even before this event of death occurs we live in a state of being thing like and as such reveal a capacity of separation. The difference between shame as being foundational rather than provisional has a profound implication because it becomes difficult to penetrate. An image springs to mind in relationship to shame and that is of a character with head lowered to avert the look at the other. Invariably we do not want to give a face to this emotion neither does it wish to speak in the name of it. On the level of the imaginary it is when a hole might appear in order to disappear into the void in order to become invisible. The difference between shame as a contingent and shame as foundational can be understood as what effaces the sculptural enterprise of Enrico David because this is related to giving a face to something that is constitutionally without one. His work is really centred upon which way you are inclined to look or not. Sometimes his work is described as having a camp touch that also might be understood as a light touch but then this switches into dense and heavy in the next shift of optical interval. This attaches itself to the idea of sculpture being like leaping or bouncing bones. Comic bouncing into the tragic and back again, this is what is implied. The work of schematicism, the figuring of the figure and the work of giving attention to the formation of form is drawn into close proximity. This is why on a simple level drawing and sculpting are held in such close or mobile proximity. The scale of both activities of drawing and sculpting are close accord and this produces a creative frisson between the surface and depth of the relationship to what is coming. In the book, 'Apparitions - Of Derrida's Other,' Kas Saghafi states: "What is coming shall be monstrous. It shall have the figure without figure or face (figure sans figure) of a monster. And yet, what kind of shape or "form" does the monstrous have? No anticipation can prepare one to identify this figure, this 'formless' form for which one does not yet have, perhaps never will have, a name. That which cannot be figured, the unacceptable, the intolerable, comes as a monster. Without precedence,

²⁷ The relationship and difference between philosophy and art is not simply between the representations of concepts and the presentation of images and affects but is perhaps a starting point of understanding the relationship.

without tradition, it shows itself, yet will go unrecognized. For the monstrous is not simply grotesque, aberrant, or deviant, a strange, misshapen anomaly, but is also a prodigious figure, marvelous beyond belief, excessive, unrestrained, and extraordinary.”²⁸

So it is this edge between what is strange and what is excessive, unrestrained and extraordinary that I wish to dwell upon. Rather than being what is most separate, it is the sense of the world over running its course and becoming too much.

The images created both show something and warn of something. It could be claimed that gestures patrol the border region between measure and the monstrous. The Ancient Greeks philosophical posited the human on the side of measure whereas the corrective of the aesthetic realm introduced the figure of the monster. Is then the role of gesture to be the tribunal of philosophy and art or to release us from such encounters?

If this work contains a gesture²⁹ it is toward that which opens without horizon. A stage is thus set: we look over, under and into.

We look into, over and under. For a moment we might escape our eyes and lose all perspective. Blindfolded, folded over, blind, we are in touch. Still in touch and stilled by touching: flesh becomes bone. A sculpture is simply left standing. Who is moving, what is moved, and why move? The distance between looking and being gazed at is for a moment closed. Is it all a game of hide and seek? Lines are being drawn, some direct and some web like. It is all like a dance, standing there together with our registers of difference opening out immeasurability.

²⁸ Kas Saghafi Apparitions - Of Derrida's Other Fordham 2010 P29

²⁹ Luce Irigaray conceives of gesture as: "Disfiguring the order of language." She also claims that: "The gesture re-imposes directions and dimensions on space, turning out of its course the teleology of time: past, present, future."

Luce Irigaray The Forgetting of Air Continuum 1999 P169